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Title: The Audra Winter Disaster ~ An Indie Author's Take

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Transcript

0:00
Hello everyone. It's me, indie author and developmental editor Julian Greystoke. And today we are here to talk
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about something that I have been wanting to talk about since I found out about it, but like haven't had time to. It's
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been driving me insane all week that I haven't had time to talk about this
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because I have things to say. I have things to say and maybe an angle coming at this that somebody else hasn't come
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at it yet because this this controversy heavy quotes that we're going to talk about has been fairly well covered here
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in the land of book the only land that I hang out in. I am not over on TikTok at
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all. So I have to get all my information by the time it disseminates to uh YouTube and it is finally disseminated
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down to me the bottom of the barrel. I am never on the bleeding edge of these
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things, but I still have lots of thoughts and opinions that might be different to what other people are
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saying because, as I mentioned, I am a published indie author and a developmental editor. So, we can really
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talk about this situation. This situation is with a young person named Audra Winters, or at least that's what
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they go by on TikTok. And they have written a book. Yay. Right. Their story

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is for the most part one we have heard many many times or at least I have heard many many times. A young person has an
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idea when they are quite young like early teens usually and they work on it
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for years and years and years. It is their baby their heart book and they finally go to publish it and it's not
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very good. In fact, we had that exact thing happen with Lightark. This story
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sounds extremely familiar down to the fact that Miss Winters and Miss Aster
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both had very very successful marketing campaigns before their book was ever
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published. The big difference is that Miss Winter's book was self-published
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whereas Lightark was traditionally published. And I want to talk a little bit about that whole angle, but but
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something that happened is that both of those books were heavily promoted before
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they were even finished, before they were published. And the promotion overpromised.
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The promotion really, really sold the books, before people had ever found out
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if either of these young people were good at writing. Yeah. And something
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that has happened with both of them, but more so with Audra's book,
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unfortunately, is that once people actually got their hands on the book, they were extremely disappointed. And as
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I've been looking at the reviews and going through some of the reviews, it seems like honest disappointment and not
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a hate campaign, which makes it even tougher for this young author. So, I'm
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not here to necessarily bring you all the latest and greatest information about this situation so much as talk
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about the situation as an indie author, as someone who coaches a lot of young
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authors, as someone who talks to a lot of young or upand cominging authors,
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their hopes, their dreams, their fears. One of their fears being that this will
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happen to them. And what can we do as indie authors to hopefully not let this
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happen to us? Now, it has been a long time since I debuted. I have many books published and
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I have a new one coming out soon. So, I have been in this game for a while now.
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I would not call myself Now, I am nowhere near as successful at marketing
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as either of these two young women. They have a very good handle on how
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marketing, especially on book talk, works. Audra has spent a lot of time and
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energy just telling people about her book, showing them the vibes. She has
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purchased a lot of really excellent art for her book. And so this is what has
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drawn people to want to purchase the book as well as her story. People are so drawn to this story. This narrative of I
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had this idea for the book when I was like 10 or 12 and I've been working on it for 10 years and it's finally here.
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this is my heart book, my baby. People are drawn to that story and that can get
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some readers into uh trouble because that story does not guarantee you, in
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fact, it often does the opposite, does not guarantee you a good quality book. I
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wanted to I've got my laptop here, that's why my face is suddenly glowing. I wanted to read you a little bit of
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this review um on Goodreads. The book is not doing well on Goodreads. It is at
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1.71, an extremely low rating. A lot of it, unfortunately, seems honest. Like I
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said, not a hate campaign. So, that is a bummer. It's called The Age of Scorpius, by the way. The book is called The Age
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of Scorpius. The cover is very pretty. There's art inside of it that I have seen some of that's extremely pretty.
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This reviewer, I think, kind of sums up a little bit of the book's issues pretty well. Poorly written, poorly developed,

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and poorly edited. She even misspelled her own madeup words. The characters were irksome and flawless. None of them
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were likable. And while all the authors talk about emotions, nothing these characters feel comes across in an
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earned way. Books that were written by teenagers read like they were written by teenagers. And in this case, The Age of
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Scorpius reads like it was written by a 12-year-old. 10 rewrites or 25. The author's writing never developed beyond
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the skill of a child. I am baffled. That's something I want to talk about and it's going to be very hard to hear
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for a lot of people and I might make some people very angry and they will probably comment about it. Nobody likes
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to hear that you the book you've been working on for 10 years, your baby, your heart book, that maybe you shouldn't
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publish it. Nobody wants to hear that. And anytime I suggest that I get so much
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push back because people are like, "Well, I worked on it for 10 years. That's got to mean something. 10 years."
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Writing is a skill and you have to level up your skill. And sometimes, now
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everybody's different. That's the annoying part. Everybody's different. But sometimes, a lot of the time, to
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level up your skill, you have to write more than one book. There are probably
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going to be a lot of uh jumping in from future Julian as I learn more as I'm
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editing this, and there's probably more information out now that I don't even know. Audra does claim that she has
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written many books, but it turns out it seems like what she actually means is just rewriting this same one over and
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over again. It seems as though Audra does not understand that you can go in and edit a book. She seems to think, and
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again, this is just my impression, that to edit a book, you have to rewrite the entire thing. And that's not how that
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works. You don't just keep writing the same book over and over until you produce a perfect version of it. That's
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not actually how writing works. And it seems to me that she might think that that's how that works. But anyway, also
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also the fact that she's rewritten the same thing over and over again. It's like you're trying to paint a painting,
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but you have no one to teach you how to paint the painting. And you're obsessed with capturing a rose, but you've never
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really seen a rose. And so you just repaint it and repaint it. All the while
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making no effort to find out what a rose looks like or ask anybody what a rose looks like. all very important parts of
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growing your skill as an artist. Audra also seems to wholeheartedly believe in
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this quote unquote rule. It's more of a concept invented by Malcolm Gladwell,
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the 10,000 hour rule that says that to master a skill, you have to put in 10,000 hours. And so Audra took that
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literally, which as she says, she's on the autism spectrum that tracks. And I say that lovingly as a fellow probably
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neurode divergent person. Um, so she has taken that completely to heart and believes that because she has rewritten
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the same book for 10,000 hours, she is now a master. Now, I can guarantee you that I have also spent that much time
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writing in my lifetime, and I do not even feel anywhere close to being a master. And I've written a lot of
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different books and gotten a lot of critique. So, it just goes to show you that that that idea is just sort of a
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baseline, a jumping off point to kind of give you a rough idea of how long it
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takes to master a skill. But that is not prescriptive. That is not just put in

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10,000 hours of anything and you'll be good at it. Because again, like I said,
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painting in a white room trying to paint a rose, but you have never seen a rose. You're not going to create a rose unless
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you go out there and get critique and get other opinions and get other viewpoints and then listen to those,
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which Audrey seems to struggle with. Like to level up your skill, you have to write more. Now, some people are a
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little bit more natural at it than others, and their debut can sometimes be
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their very first book ever, and it will work out. I would argue that those books often still are not as good as they
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could be. and if the author had set them aside and written something else as their debut that that book would have
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been better. But the frustrating thing is like sometimes it works out. And so
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you always want to think that you're the exception that you're the one whose like heart book is good enough is the special
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one is the exception that should be published. You can't guarantee that. And so you might run into this problem. And
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I know it's really discouraging to hear that something that you've worked on for 10 years, you maybe shouldn't publish,
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but you're a writer. You wrote that book. This is not the only idea that you're going to have. So many people
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latch on to this idea that they had when they were 12. And they will not let it go. And you can you can hold on to that
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and you can hold on to that as long as you want. That is your idea. That is your book and it's beautiful. But also
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you could write some other stories with new ideas and then maybe come back to
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your beautiful youthful idea when you are more leveled up when you have more
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skills. But here's something else that we have been hearing that Audra did not

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do and that is seek out critique. she I don't think had a developmental editor
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or if she did they were either a too gentle with her or b she didn't take any
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of their advice. Also, I'm hearing there's a lot of typos in this book. But it does make me really curious like if
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this book was free of typos, would it be getting as harsh of reviews as it's getting? Because one thing I have
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noticed as an indie author is that our readers are unforgiving of typos. I perhaps this young author was really
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hoping that as an indie and as such a young person that she would be forgiven for typos and that sort of thing. And um
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no, especially in the indie world that is not the case. Sorry if the lighting keeps changing. I'm using natural
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lighting mostly and clouds keep going over the sun. So I feel like I'm like the amazing color changing Julian. Yeah,
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I can see myself growing paler as we speak. It is super super super important
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as part of your process, I don't care who you are, that you seek out critique
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and that you pay attention to that critique. And if that critique seems harsh, you have to learn how to handle
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it. I think Audrey would really benefit from being in the type of critique
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situation. I have voluntarily thrown myself into this type of situation as much as possible where fellow authors
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critique your work and to your face and you have to just sit there and listen to it. You cannot respond. You cannot talk
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back. You sit there and you take your notes. You don't have to agree with every one of those notes, but it's
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really important to learn how to sit and take critique. Don't argue. Don't explain. sit and listen and absorb. And
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I think Audra would have a really hard time with that, but I think it would be very good for her. As I've talked about
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many, many, many times on this channel, you have created your baby. This is your baby. And you have to let someone tell
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you that your baby is ugly so that you can fix it. You have to. You really can't avoid that step unless you want to
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end up in an Audra winter situation. Now, to be clear, an editor is not going to be able to magically fix everything.
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And perhaps an editor did try to fix this book and perhaps it was too flawed because again I remind you this is this
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is a book that was at least originally written by a 12-year-old. It's really hard to rewrite a book that was written
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by a 12-year-old. An editor is not a magic key to fix everything. And many
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books that had editors are still deeply flawed. And a lot of that again comes
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down to practice and leveling up your skill. It might seem like so many authors just step right out into the
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world and they're amazing already, but either A, they've done a lot of practicing behind the scenes beforehand
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that you don't get to hear about, or B, they've had a lot of help. There is a lot going around, although I do not know
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this 100%. I am not in Audrey's life, but there is a lot of suspicion that those people that she did ask for help
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from were friends and family who of course if you've got good friends and good family, they're going to praise
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your book. They're going to tell you it's great because they love you and they can't see the flaws. Like if I want
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to feel good about my book, I send it to my mother because she is like my ideal reader. She will tell me all the things
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that she loves. But I don't only send it to my mother. Now, of course, it depends
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on your friends and depends on your family because my husband will rip my book into tiny little shreddy shreds.
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Like, he will demolish it. But my mom, so kind, my ideal reader, if she has any
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critiques, they are usually small and easily fixed. So, you have to get harsh critique. Now, I do have a whole video
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here on this channel about how to identify bad faith critique, how to identify when critique is not helpful.
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But just because it might hurt your feelings doesn't mean that it's not helpful critique. Feeling upset about a
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note you have gotten is not the same as that note not being a good note, which is something that especially young
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authors who are still learning have a hard time with. And I fear that Audra might have a hard time with.
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I have an emotional support ice cream that I'm going to be eating now um and ruining my lipstick. So, you know, why
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did I put lipstick on if I was going to be eating ice cream? Who knows? Now, a little bit a little bit of the situation
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is also a little bit the reader's fault. Don't come for me. From what I understand,
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she only ever put one example of her writing up online, and a lot of people didn't think it was very good.
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Everything else was all sight unseen. It was all just vibes, emotions, promises,
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beautiful images, and that does not equal good writing. People on book talk
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are very, very easily convinced, very, very easily bamboozled by emotions and
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pretty pictures and heartfelt stories of young authors who are just following
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their dreams. Those do not, a quality book make. So, if you spend, and I heard
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she was charging a pretty penny for these books. If you spend a healthy hunk of cash for a pre-order of a book whose
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writing you have not even sampled, it's a little bit on you if the writing is bad. Like, you bought that. You chose to
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do that before you even knew if it was good. Which is why all of my books have samples available to read on Amazon. So,
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you can decide if you like my writing or not before you buy it. Please read the sample before you buy it and decide if
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it seems interesting to you. I put a lot of effort and time and years. I'm almost
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40 by the way, so of practice writing multiple books, publishing multiple
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books, and growing my craft. For me, it is incredibly important that I grow my
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craft more important than it is that I advertise my books amazingly. I want my
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words to be of a high quality. And I'm always growing. I don't think I'm done.
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I want to improve and improve and improve. So I'm hoping that a book books
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that I write 10 years from now are going to be a marketked improvement from the books that I have written now. The idea
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of stagnating or heaven forbid even backsliding in my skill as a writer is
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terrifying to me. And one of the ways that I keep myself sharp is seeking out critique as much as possible. We're
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talking beta readers. We're talking critique groups. We're talking like anybody that I can get to put eyes on my book. I'm basically throwing my
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manuscripts at people being like, "Tell me what is wrong with it." And that is the attitude that you need to have this
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scenario from the angle of an indie. Because there is a lot of stigma. There
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has been and there still is. Although self-published books are rising in popularity thanks to places like book
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talk where we can finally advertise our books. I don't but other people do to great success where we can advertise our
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books that might not have been seen previously but the stigma still exists
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that self-published books are inferior to traditionally published books. So
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this book really made me think of lightark which I have talked about extensively on this channel. If you want
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to watch me go through lightark with a fine tooth comb and point out all of its
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many, many issues and talk about how we can avoid these issues as authors, then
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I have an entire series of videos for you. But lightark, aside from having the
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spelling and grammatical errors mostly fixed, although not all, lightark really
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strikes me as a lot like the descriptions that I have heard of this book, The Age of Scorpius. Messy,
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flawed, cool worldbuing ideas, poorly executed, difficult characters that were
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not again well executed. But the thing about Lightark is that it was traditionally published. But let me just
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let me pull up lightark. Let me pull up lightark and see what its score is. Reminder that Age of Scorpius its
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current score on Goodreads is a painful 1.71. As of recording, I do believe her
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Goodreads has been locked down, so you cannot post new reviews. I am not 100%
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sure that that's still the case. It may not be, but um since she has taken the book down, it probably still is. But
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obviously, this will not remain the case forever. Lightark is sitting at 3.85,
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which is still pretty low for a bestselling book, but for some reason,
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Nightbane is at 4.09. But part of that is because it just has
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had more eyes on it. It's had more people to see it and give it five stars.
19:02
But again, like I said, the authors really reminded me of each other. these two young people. Although Alex Aster is
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older, she likes to portray herself as pretty young. And they both had the same thing. Oh, like this is a book that I've
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had in my heart forever since I was little and I'm finally writing it and I'm finally publishing it. Same exact
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Saab story. We need to stop falling for this exact same story. This doesn't So many people have this story. I'm really
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sorry to tell you this if this is your exact story, but um maybe this makes you feel better. You're not special, but
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you're not alone. So, yay. I don't know. I guess I wrote my first book when I was
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about 13, and thank God I did not publish it. Back then, I was convinced that I had written a masterpiece, but oh
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my goodness, no. No. Thank god I didn't
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have access to Tik Tok back then. Anyway, these two books have so much in common from their general sort of
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disastrous writing to their authors having basically the exact same backstory to them being marketed almost
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entirely on vibes and very little on the power of their actual craft of the
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actual writing. But I feel like Lightark, and this is maybe just my feeling, I feel like Lightark is
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forgiven more because all of the spelling has been corrected. Well, most of. and it's traditionally published.
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And people, some people, not all obviously, but some people cannot get past the mindset that somehow
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traditionally published books are better. They think that the gatekeeping
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produces better books, but a lot of times it does not. We've read so many
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books here on this channel that were traditionally published that got past the gatekeepers and are awful. I'm
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reading one right now. Uh, Silver Elite I'm reading right now as a readalong and it is awful. And I'm like, if how did
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this get published? Did this pass any quality control whatsoever? I don't think so. It makes me sad that this book
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was so well advertised and then rushed and poorly received because it is
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further cementing in a lot of people's minds that self-published books are bad.
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The real thing is like at least hire an editor. at least at least hire an editor. Now, as I said, I'm not on
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TikTok, but I have been trying to keep up with things about this as they come out. I cannot look away. It's like a
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slow motion car crash. She does claim that she did hire editors. She says on
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and off that there was a developmental editor somewhere in this process, but I am color me dubious or if there was that
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that developmental editor wasn't very well listened to or they tried their best and this book was just too flawed.
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a number of things could have happened, but she also says that she hired a copy and line editor, but then she wasn't
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able to implement all of their edits because she was rushing the book out. And it's like, if you don't have time to
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implement your edits, then you don't publish your book. This is why I don't advertise a publishing date until the
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book is done, done, completely done. I could publish it today, then I post my
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publishing date. I think a lot of people will forgive more of your book if there are less
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spelling and grammatical errors. I have found that people are hugely unforgiving of any spelling and grammatical errors,
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even if there's only a few in your book. I have had people legitimately claim that like a single spelling error made a
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book unreadable. So, like that's a big deal. And I'm I'm really curious to know like if this book
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had at least been copy and line edited, how would it be scoring? Would it be
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scoring as low? Would people would readers actually be able to recognize the other flaws if there were no
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spelling and grammatical errors? I have a lot of I have so many questions about this book, honestly, and this whole process. My my understanding is that at
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first Audra had what is an extremely predictable reaction to everybody telling her that her baby was ugly. Uh,
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and that was that she was mad and she was talking back and she was sassing back to people, which you cannot do as
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an author. I cannot express this enough, especially if you're an indie. You cannot. Do not sass people back. Your
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reviews are going to do what they're going to do. You just have to let them do it. Okay. Now, the on the part of the
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reviewers, everybody who left a review on Goodreads, you were fine. You left a review on Goodreads. If you sought Audra
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out, if you went to her Tik Tok and addressed her personally with your
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review, that I would say is not nearly as um kosher, we'll say. Like, I can't
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stop you, but I'm not going to approach an author with my review of their book. I'm not going to tag them in it. I'm not
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going to approach them. I'm not going to shove it in their face cuz I believe that reviews are for readers, not for authors. Now, she did need to understand
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that her book is not ready. It's not done cooking. Is certainly not done cooking. And I think she has gotten the
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message and at this point she has finally internalized that and she's like ready to take it down. I understand that
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she's taking it down or has taken it down and plans to revamp and republish
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it. As of me editing this video, we've gotten a little bit more information about her plans for her revamp of this
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book. She was going to try to get it back out by December. She has since amended that, which is good because December is a very tight uh deadline to
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try to turn an entire book around because this thing doesn't just need spelling and grammar. It needs a developmental overhaul. I don't know if
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she's going to do that or if she's just going to get the spelling and grammar cleaned up. But the thing that she seems to have internalized, from what I've
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seen, is incorrect. She seems to have internalized that she just didn't have enough peripherals. She wants to do book
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borders. She wants to do sprayed edges. She wants to do more art, different art. That's not what people were asking her
24:50
for. I don't know where her hangup is, understanding that the story itself and
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the craft are the problem. Probably because she's internalized it so much that if she realizes that, she will
25:02
believe that we are saying she is the problem, which is not true. You are not your book. Your book is not you.
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Although she is becoming the problem due to her inability to see what is right in
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front of her. that the book does not need more pretty frills and more art. It needs time to cook. It probably needs a
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thorough and probably somewhat vicious developmental edit if it's going to be the best that it can be. However,
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there's this whole big crazy thing cuz she had a ton of pre-orders. She's got a lot of people already have this book.
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And so, like, there's a lot of angry people who are like, "We want refunds and all this stuff." And these are things you don't have to deal with if
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you don't go the route that she went. Like I don't even really do pre-orders. I want to make sure that my book is as
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good as it possibly can be and then tell people about it. Did you know that you can continue to market your book well
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after it's published? And I do. I do continue to do that. You don't ever have
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to stop marketing your book. Like the time to market your book is not only right before you publish it. Now, as I
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market my book, people can go look at it at Goodreads and see that there are people who've read it, that it does have
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a star rating, that there are reviews instead of just having to count on maybe it'll be good. So, the way that she went
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about it has unfortunately left her in a really tough place. And I would know, I'm a developmental editor. I help
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people. I go through your book line by line sometimes and help you figure out
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how to improve it on a story and even sentence level. So, if that's something
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you're interested in, um, hit me up, find me on Fiverr. Your first five keywords are only $25 to try me out and
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see if we would be a good fit because not every editor is going to be right for every author. So, and from what I have heard, again, just what I've heard,
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I I'm not the most up to date on this, so I could be corrected. Please correct me in the comments if I'm saying anything that's out of date or just
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wrong. I have heard that she's hiring line and copy editors, but there has not
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been a mention of developmental editors, and I think her book needs one of those two. I think she's willing to say, "Oh,
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yes, my book has spelling and grammatical errors." But I think she's a lot less willing, again, because it's her baby, to say that it has flaws with
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the characters, with the plot, with the pacing, with the world building, with the writing, with the pros. Those things
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are a lot more time inensive and skill building. They do build your skill, but
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they're a lot more time intensive to fix. It's a lot scarier to fix. Sometimes it can be scary to know that
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you have to make a big developmental change to your story, but not be 100% sure that you have the skills to pull
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off the change as it needs to be made. I still get notes where I'm like, I I agree with this note. I know this needs
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to change, but do I have the skill to improve this segment of my book the way
27:52
that it needs to be improved? And this video has been kind of all over the place. I just wanted to talk about this, not so much, like I said, to report in,

27:59
but more to talk about just like from the angle of an indie author, the
28:04
frustration that this is making indie authors look bad. And also to talk about
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something that, like I said, is probably going to make a lot of you feel disheartened or even angry with me. the
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idea that your heart book, your first book, no matter how long you've been working on it, might not be the one that
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you want to publish first. You You don't have to throw it in the garbage. Like, so many authors treat it as though I'm
28:31
saying, "Throw your book in the garbage, light it on fire." All I'm asking is for you to maybe let it have a little sleep
28:38
and write something new and then return to your book and see if your skill has grown. See if you want to take it in a
28:44
new direction. see if there's something that you can do to improve it that you aren't able to do until you grow your
28:51
skill. Like I said, I know this can be so frustrating to hear, especially if you have been working on something for
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years, 10 years. But it does not matter how long you've been working on it. So many people get mad at me and say like,
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I've been working on this for 10 years. I've been working on this for 15 years, 20 years, whatever it is. I've I've had this idea in my head for years and years
29:10
and years. I've been working on it for years and years and years. That must mean it's good. No, it means that you love it a lot, and that's amazing.
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That's definitely something that you need as an author, but it doesn't automatically mean it's good. Length of
29:23
time spent on a project does not automatically mean quality. And I know
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that that's really, really hard to hear and so frustrating. And you probably want to punch me in my stupid face right now because many of you are probably
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working on that book, your heart book, and you've probably been working on it forever. And to hear Julian say that

29:42
maybe you won't publish that book, maybe you shouldn't publish that book is like a punch to the gut and you're just like,
29:48
"No, you're wrong, Julian. I'm the exception. Mine will be better." And maybe you are, but maybe you're not. And
29:56
all I'm asking, all I am asking is you to consider that maybe you're not the
30:02
exception. Just consider it. You don't have to take it to heart. You don't have to listen to me, but consider it. and
30:09
consider setting that baby aside. Don't throw it away. Don't light it on fire.
30:16
Set it aside and let it have a little nap, a little sleep, and you can come
30:21
back to it later. I still think about that book that I wrote when I was 13.
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Then I'm so glad I didn't try to publish. But if I rewrote it now, which I often think about doing, it would be a
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very different creature and better in so many ways. in a thousand thousand ways.
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Even if I had started writing at 13 and had been working on it until now, if that was the only thing I worked on, I
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would not be at the same skill level as I am now. Now, you might say that I'm not actually that good. If you've read
30:51
my books, you might be like, Julian, this is the skill level you're at. Wow, embarrassing. You could say that. You
30:58
You could say that. But I'm certainly better than I was when I was 13. And it's because I have written multiple
31:05
books. And it's because I have gotten a lot of harsh, hard to hear critiques.
31:13
So, I hope the best for Audra. I hope she doesn't give up. But I also want her
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to take a step back and try just like writing. Just write to write. Just write
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for fun. Just post somewhere for free. That's the other thing you can do. If you have your heart book and you want to
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get it out there into the world, put it somewhere for free. like then it's out there in the world. It can find its
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audience and as you improve, you can potentially rewrite it and you've already got a little bit of a built-in
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audience for it that will want to buy it when it comes out and looks all amazing with its great cover and everything. One
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thing that this situation has definitely taught me is that I want to focus on getting my actual pros into my
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advertising more often. I want to get more quotes out there. I want to let people see my words and determine if
31:59
they like the book based on that. Not just on my cover, not just on my aesthetic, not just on my vibes or
32:05
tropes, my my actual craft. Oh, one more thing I wanted to talk about. I have heard that Audra has argued back with
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people who say that her main character is like weird, difficult to understand, poorly written by saying, "Well, I'm
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neurody divergent and so is my main character and that's why she's like that." It's the she's like me so you
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can't critique it mentality which I often butt up against because like once you've put it in a book and ma made
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people pay money for it, they can critique it. This isn't your personal diary. This is a book you've asked
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people to pay money for. They get to critique it. So I'm sorry if if the the characters like you and they don't like
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that and that hurts your feelings, but you charge people for that. Something I've talked about with authors that I
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have coached. I've coached a lot of neurode divergent authors and we have talked about like your own voices
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experiences within books because like I said a book is not a personal diary and
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there are certain expectations and standards and you know rules. Rules are

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meant to be broken obviously but you have to understand them first. expectations, I think, is a good way to put it about how books go, how they
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flow, how characters speak. And you can have a character that deals with your
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neurode divergence, but if you try to make it so realistic to the real world, it can be really difficult for your
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reader to like enjoy that experience and to follow your story because first and
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foremost, it is a book that is telling a story. It is not a personal diary about your neurode divergence. For example, I
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have anxiety and my characters all have anxiety. I can't help myself. I write a lot of characters with anxiety.
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I don't think I'll ever be able to not write a character with anxiety because I don't know what life feels like without
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it. But I have had to take the critique sometimes. This happened with Mave in Adventure Mage. People be like, "Hey,
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she gets really worked up here and really stressed and then it turns out that it's nothing." And that feels really anticlimactic. And of course,
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your knee-jerk reaction is like, well, yeah, that's what anxiety is. Of course, she gets worked up and it's nothing. That's anxiety. But it is a book, a
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story. And when a character gets worked up, there is an expectation from the reader that this is leading to something
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because it is a story. It's not real life, it's a story. And so, while I still do portray Mave's anxiety as
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sometimes being overblown and sometimes she is too stressed out about something that is small, I did have to take it
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back significantly and and make it a bit more small and subtle simply because it
34:42
is a story. So, that is something to think about if you are writing your own experiences, especially with things like
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neurody divergence or anxiety or things like that, which is what I've had experience with. I can't necessarily talk to other I can't talk to other

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types. It's probably very different if you have like a physical disability or something like that. So like this is
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just talking to people who are talking about being on the autism spectrum or something like that because it is a book
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and people have expectations and books move in a certain way narratively. You
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may have to tone it down. You don't have to eliminate it. Certainly don't eliminate it. Mave is still a little
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ball of anxiety all the time, but I made it work more with the plot and the way
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that books flow. Again, as I have looked even further into this and seen more about this and looked at what Audra is
35:32
saying, it also does feel like she's using this as an excuse for poor
35:37
writing. From my understanding, she has claimed that her main character is autistic. That's fine. And the
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character's world is the character's special interest. her whole entire world
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is her special interest and that's why there's so much repetitive info dumping and that feels lazy to me. That feels
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like a lazy excuse because yeah, your character would have a special interest in the world, but the whole world, she
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knows everything about her world because it's her special interest. No, that feels like a lazy excuse for info
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dumping to me in my opinion. Anyway, oh my goodness, this has probably been very
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long and very rambling and probably very frustrating. And if any of you are still listening, kudos to you. I appreciate
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you for sticking around cuz I bet you a bunch of you left your angry comments and left as soon as you heard me saying
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that maybe you shouldn't publish your heart book, especially if it's the first thing you've ever written. Hopefully,
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this is maybe a little bit helpful to some of you. um maybe it will assuage some of your fears because like the
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number one way to avoid this situation is to get critique and to listen to it.
36:44
Don't hide your book. Don't hide your pros. Put it out there or get it to people who will tell you how you can fix
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it. And that is like the number one way to not end up in an Audra type
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situation. Of course, remember that editors are not miracle workers and some
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books might be too flawed even for an editor to fix. I'm looking at you, light lurk. I don't think an editor could fix
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that. Or if they could, it would be a pretty substantial rewrite. Anyway, well, I hope you're not sick of
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voiceover Julian yet because I have more. I've been keeping an eye on the whole Audra situation, and I've also
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been watching other people talk about her who have more information than I do, and I have taken down some notes, formed
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some more opinions. So, this is just more of Julian's opinions. Everything should be caveed within my opinion. So
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if I don't say that, know that in my opinion is there hovering unsaid. But here are a few more thoughts about the
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Audra situation. As of right now, August 14th is when I am editing this and it
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will go up on the 15th. So anything past that I don't have info on in this video. But anyway, my thoughts are I think that
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Audra may be living in two fantasy worlds. The one in her book and the one where she is a CEO book entrepreneur.
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because if you pay attention to a lot of her videos, she is really really into the angle of being a businesswoman and
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running a business and having an LLC. I have no idea if she actually does, but she claims that she does and having
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employees. And she talks about that as much, if not more so, than she talks

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about like living in the world of her book. And so, I think she may be kind of caught between two imaginary worlds,
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neither of which is real or accurate to her situation. I also wanted to iterate
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to anybody who might need to hear this. Setting a book or idea aside does not mean that you just didn't love it
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enough, which I believe I've heard Audrey say like, "I love this book enough to keep trying for it." Implying
38:44
that if you recognize that your book is too flawed for you to fix right now at your skill level and you need to set it
38:49
aside, that you just didn't love it enough. And that is not true. Sometimes loving an idea means setting it aside
38:57
for a while until you've leveled up enough to do it justice. The next thing I want to ask is, is she one person or a
39:04
whole team? Because her videos go back and forth a lot. First, she acts like she has people's livelihoods relying on
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her. And then she will say, "Well, you can't hold me accountable for this because I'm just one person." Which is
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it? Do you have a whole team behind you that you're paying their bills or are
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you just one person trying to get your book out? You can't be both. And by that same token, you cannot hang all of your
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mental health on one book or one book idea. If you find that you are in that
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position, you're not ready to publish the book. Now, this is a place that you can be as an author. It's okay. This is
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like a part of the process is to be in that place where you're like, I'm not ready to share this yet. I know if I do
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and people don't like it, it is going to crush me. It is going to make me
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absolutely fall into a deep, deep depression. Audra has implied multiple times that this situation has made her
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feel like she wants to game over herself. And if you know that's where you'll be, if people don't like your book, then that's okay. But you're not
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ready to publish it yet. That is a place that a lot of people have to go through
40:11
in their author process. So don't be alarmed. Don't think that you're broken just because you feel that way, but that
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means you're probably not ready to publish it yet. Another thing she often says is, "Well, my team loves it." And
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all I can think is, "Well, of course they do. You hired them. You're paying them to love it. You wouldn't have hired
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a bunch of artists who didn't like your book. That would be silly." It is very confusing like how many people she has
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on her quote unquote team. What is her understanding of her team? Honestly, let
40:42
me just be real. In my opinion, again, I feel like Audra is an exhausting human being to know. I feel like her her quote
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unquote team are hanging on by a thread sometimes because she like talking about
40:55
the process that she plans to go through to edit this book, if you go and watch that video, daily meetings, you know,
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and and it feels like Audrey wants to be handheld through this process. She wants
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to sit down with an artist while she reddrafts a scene. She wants multiple
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people brainstorming with her at any given time because she likes that idea of being like a CEO and having a team.
41:18
But like at the same time, that's not how you write a book. She's doing too much. She is doing way too much. Anybody
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who's watching her go through this process, if you're thinking, "Oh my god, this sounds intimidating. How am I going to do this?" She's doing way too much.
41:31
You don't have to do any of this. If you hire an editor, you look at their notes,
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you implement the changes, you publish the book if you are an indie author.
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Team not required. You can hire artists if you want to. If you want to, not a

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requirement. And certainly not a requirement or all of these other peripherals like bookmarks and sprayed
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edges and stuff. But I think I mentioned before, I believe that Audra thinks that to edit a book, you have to rewrite it.
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So, I think she's rewriting whole scenes that could just use some surgery, a
42:08
little bit of poking around, taking out things that don't need to be there, putting in things that do need to be there. But she, I think, feels like she
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needs to rewrite everything every time, and it then it'll just be perfect one of
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those times. For me as a writing coach and editor and someone who has been in
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the indie space for a while, these are a couple of red flags that when I hear people saying uh it just like yeah, it's
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just red flags. It just throws up all my alerts. Alerts are blaring. So avoid saying these things. I feel if you are
42:39
getting ready to publish your book, the red flags are my words and writing are just different. That's an excuse for uh
42:46
I don't want to edit it. So people are just going to have to deal with it cuz I'm just built different and people just
42:52
don't understand it. Now it is possible for the occasional reader to miss the point. That's fairly normal. That will
42:58
happen to any book. But if you are getting as many reviews that are negative as Audra was getting and
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they're all saying the same thing, that's not people being too dumb to understand your book. That's not people
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missing the point. That the problem is your book. The call is coming from inside the house. So, if I hear anyone
43:17
say, "Well, my writing is just different or people just don't understand it." Enormous giant red flags. And finally,
43:25
Audra likes to encourage people to be artists, to look out for other artists. The art is the important thing. But

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she's talking at least 50% of the time, if not more so, about the business stuff that she's struggling with. and she does
43:38
not need to be struggling with any of it because it's all peripherals that she's decided that she needs because she also
43:44
has this fantasy of being a book entrepreneur. When all you really need to do if if
43:49
this is your heart book and you love it so much, do your best for the story, not
43:55
all of the pretty things. She wants to have written. She doesn't want to write. She wants to have written and she wants
44:01
to skip the line. She wants to already be a best-seller who has people clamoring for her merch. She wants to be
44:09
that, but you can't start there. And she's finding that out very quickly because I don't think that any amount of
44:16
peripherals that she's going to throw at this book are going to sell it anymore. People have seen it. People have heard
44:21
about it. And you can throw pretty pictures and playlists and art at this
44:27
thing until you die. But unless you fix the story and the writing on the page,
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nothing is gonna save this. And even then, it might not save this. And she might have to find out the hard way that
44:41
she is going to have to set this aside if she wants it to succeed. Anyway, those are all my extra notes about
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Audra. She does seem to me like she might be a very frustrating person to know. I am like the opposite of Audra. I
44:53
am the anti-Audra. I am so relaxed and groovy. I'm just out here vibing. I'm
44:58
like, once my book leaves my hands, hate it, love it, use it as a doors stop or a coaster, I don't care. It's your book
45:04
now. I don't even reread my books once they're out in the world. Like, once I have gotten them good enough that I can
45:10

stand the thought of them going out there and being published, I let them loose like feral animals. And also, I
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don't do a lot of preamble. Like, I obviously want to let people know that the book is coming out, but I don't do
45:24
all of that side stuff. And my books certainly don't have sprayed edges. I try to get a decent looking cover on
45:30
them. That's about as far as we go here because for one thing, I don't have the money to go further than that. I don't
45:36
know where Audrey's getting all this money for this entire project and this team she supposedly has. I suspect her
45:42
family may be wealthy. She has never really talked about that. Like she talked a little bit about how like, oh,
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the Kickstarter, we're using the Kickstarter money and I'm buying the books in bulk so we don't have to do
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print on demand. But like you're not saving enough money by doing that to be hiring all of these people. So either
46:00
she claims that she's hiring them and they're actually just friends doing this stuff for free because they want to get
46:06
their names out there. They're doing it for the clout or her family has money and she just doesn't want to admit that
46:11
because that doesn't fit into her narrative. Those are my thoughts and opinions. Again, I keep stressing I do
46:17
not have this information. It's just my opinion, which is what you came here for. But anyway, like I said, I'm the
46:23
anti Audra, so I'm not doing any of that stuff. I am just vibing. I am so relaxed and groovy. I don't set deadlines if I
46:30
can help it because that's just the way my brain works. So, if you're sitting here chewing your nails being like, "Oh
46:36
my god, how am I going to do all this stuff that Audra's doing?" You don't have to. I have great news. You do not
46:42

have to. Those are my thoughts. I hope some of them were coherent. Don't forget
46:47
that you can follow me on Patreon to keep up with my authorly endeavors and also get exclusive videos not seen here
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on the regular channel such as I knew that she was probably going to be taking
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the book down. And so I went and screenshotted her sample pages before
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they were taken down. Like as of today, as of filming, her sample is no longer available to read. I got those pages.
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So, I think I probably will do something for patrons and channel members where we look at those pages and see how her
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first I assume her first chapter was looking and how flawed or not flawed it
47:24
is. So, follow me on Patreon or become a channel member to see things like that, extras not seen on the regular channel.
47:31
And of course, as I mentioned, I'm a developmental editor. So, find me on Fiverr, ask any questions you want. Feel free to ask questions. Even if you
47:38
decide to not use me as your editor, that's fine. Finding out information is all part of the process. I finally got
47:45
to talk about this. I finally got to get it out of my system. Thank God. And now I can go do other things. I just needed
47:51
to get it out of my system so bad. Thanks for watching and I will see all of you again next time with whatever it is I happen to be doing next time. Bye.
48:04
What? You're George McFly. And you're my patrons. patrons like Allison, Lisa, Jen, Tex, Moon Island,
48:11
Zenith, Ashley, Bunnet, Nemo, the Sorcerer, Tactical Hot Dog, Haley, History Nerd, Pixel, Lizzy, Rya,
48:17
Christina, Cameron, Lady Craig, and Lunar Muse, AJ, Marshy, Semi-Dark, GK,
48:22
Scout, Anakah, Jen, Gay, Tutter, Tina, Laknunga, SB, Boots, Martha, Baggins, July, Bird, Anonymous, Sarah, Cat, 78 kg
48:30
of shade, Ingred, Roma, Haley, Sam, Kira, Mooney, Putammancer, Kohicaro, Kirstston, Bear, Jojo, Bookish, Robin,

48:38
Ursula, Caitlyn, Jessica, KJ, Muffler, Celia, Deborah, Swamp Goblin, Waifu,
48:43
Sophia, Marine, Kit, Light, Julie, Patrick, Callison, Vampire, Anti-hero, Shelby, Zire, Jesper, Renie, Scribbling
48:50
Cat, Savvy, Jenny, and Amanda. Stand tall, boy. Have some respect for yourself.
49:05
[Music]